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3. SCOPE OF CLAIM FOR PATENT

1. In an information card including a memory that stores information data, the information data including one of image data and acoustic data, the improvement wherein the information data contains inherent data that is embedded in the information data according to Steganography.

2. An information card according to claim 1, wherein the inherent data shows one of legitimacy of the information card and a card owner of the information card.

3. An information card according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the memory stores a password for permitting the information data to be read from the memory.

4. An information card according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the information card employs a customized key in order to give a permission to extract the inherent data from the information data.

5. An information card system comprising:
an information card including a memory that stores information data, the information data including one of image data and acoustic data, the information data containing inherent data that is embedded in the information data according to Steganography, the memory storing a password for permitting the information data to be read from the memory; and,

PCT/US99/21663

a data processing terminal including input means for submitting a password, password checking means for checking the submitted password against the password stored in the information card to permit the information data to be read from the memory, and output means for outputting the read information data.

6. An information card system comprising:

an information card including a memory that stores information data, the information data including one of image data and acoustic data, the information data containing inherent data that is embedded in the information data according to Steganography; and,

a data processing terminal including input means for submitting a customized key, inherent data extracting means for extracting the inherent data with the use of the submitted customized key, and output means for outputting the extracted inherent data.

7. An information card system according to claim 6, wherein the memory stores a password for permitting the information data to be read from the memory, and wherein the data processing terminal includes input means for submitting a password, password checking means for checking the submitted password against the password stored in the information card to permit the information data to be read from the memory, and output means for outputting the read information data.

8. An information card system according to any one of claims 5 to 7, wherein the extracted inherent data is wholly or partly checked against one of inherent data read from a

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host and inherent data entered from an external source.

9. An information card or an information card system according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the inherent data is embedded according to Steganography by the steps of converting one of image data and acoustic data, both formed as information data, to pure binary code data, or converting the pure binary code data to canonical gray code data, decomposing one of the pure binary code data and the canonical gray code data into bit planes, segmenting the bit planes into regions according to a complexity measure, and replacing complex region-forming data with the inherent data.

10. An information card or an information card system according to claim 9, wherein the inherent data to be embedded is subject to a conjugation operation.

11. An information card or an information card system according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the memory comprises an IC chip.

12. An information card or an information card system according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the information card carries a photograph on a surface thereof, and one of the information data and the inherent data is image data representing the photograph.

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